

REMARKS

I. Introduction

With the addition of new claims 17 and 18, claims 8, 10, and 14 to 18 are pending in the present application. In view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks, it is respectfully submitted that all of the presently pending claims are allowable, and reconsideration is respectfully requested.

II. Rejection of Claim 8 Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e)

Claim 8 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as anticipated by U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0170987 ("Aoki et al."). It is respectfully submitted that Aoki et al. does not anticipate these claims for at least the following reasons.

Claim 1 recites, *inter alia*, a valve sleeve surrounding an armature and a valve needle along the entire length of the armature and the entire length of the valve needle, wherein the radial cross section and the wall thickness of the inflow-side region are constant from the collar to an inflow-side end of the valve sleeve and wherein the decreased radial cross section and the decreased wall thickness of the discharge-side region are constant from the collar to a discharge-side end of the valve sleeve, the discharge-side end of the valve sleeve disposed axially beyond the valve-closure member. Although Applicant does not necessarily agree with the merits of the present rejection, to facilitate prosecution, claim 8 has been amended herein without prejudice to recite that ***an outer diameter and the radial cross section of the valve sleeve decrease between the inflow-side region and the discharge-side region on the collar.*** Support for this amendment may be found, for example, at page 2, lines 1 to 3 and page 4, lines 20 to 23 of the Specification and at Figure 1.

The Office Action contends that Figure 2 of Aoki et al. illustrates a valve sleeve 14 wherein the radial cross section of the sleeve 14 decreases at a collar. However, it is plainly apparent that, in Figure 2 of Aoki et al., the outer diameter of element 14 does not decrease at a collar. In this regard, Aoki et al. does not disclose, or even suggest, a valve sleeve surrounding an armature and a valve needle along the entire length of the armature and the entire length of the valve needle, wherein the radial cross section and the wall thickness of the inflow-side region are constant from a collar to an inflow-side end of the valve sleeve, wherein

the decreased radial cross section and the decreased wall thickness of the discharge-side region are constant from the collar to a discharge-side end of the valve sleeve, the discharge-side end of the valve sleeve disposed axially beyond the valve-closure member, and wherein ***an outer diameter and a radial cross section of a valve sleeve decrease between an inflow-side region and a discharge-side region on the collar.***

As indicated above, Aoki et al. does not disclose, or even suggest, all of the features of claim 8. As such, it is respectfully submitted that Aoki et al. does not anticipate claim 8. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

III. Rejection of Claims 10 and 14 Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 10 and 14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Aoki et al. It is respectfully submitted that Aoki et al. does not render unpatentable claims 10 and 14 for at least the following reasons.

Claims 10 and 14 ultimately depend from claim 8 and therefore include all of the features recited in claim 8. As more fully set forth above in support of the patentability of claim 8, Aoki et al. does not disclose, or even suggest, all of the features recited in claim 8. As such, Aoki et al. does not disclose, or even suggest, all of the features of either of claims 10 and 14 and therefore does not render unpatentable either of claims 10 and 14. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

IV. Rejection of Claims 15 and 16 Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 15 and 16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over the combination of Aoki et al. and U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0170987 ("Dallmyer et al."). It is respectfully submitted that the combination of Aoki et al. and Dallmyer et al. does not render unpatentable claims 15 and 16 for at least the following reasons.

Although Applicant does not necessarily agree with the merits of the present rejection, to facilitate prosecution, claim 15 has been amended herein without prejudice to recite that the **intake pipe spans an axial distance between the valve sleeve and a seal disposed in a region of central fuel supply.** Support

for this amendment may be found, for example, at page 3, lines 9 to 11 and 13 to 14 of the Specification and at Figure 1.

The Examiner contends at page 6 of the Office Action that it would have been obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art to press the assembly 282 of Dallmyer et al. into the device of Aoki et al. However, even if these elements were combined as suggested, element 283, considered by the Examiner to constitute an intake pipe, would not span an axial distance between element 14 of Aoki et al. and the seal at the fuel inlet of Aoki et al. Thus the proposed combination of Aoki et al. and Dallmyer et al. does not disclose, or even suggest, an intake pipe that is inserted into a valve sleeve in an inflow-side region, the intake pipe extending axially beyond the valve sleeve in an intake-side direction to ***span an axial distance between the valve sleeve and a seal disposed in a region of central fuel supply.***

As indicated above, the combination of Aoki et al. and Dallmyer et al. does not disclose, or even suggest, all of the features of claim 15. As such, it is respectfully submitted that the combination of Aoki et al. and Dallmyer et al. does not render unpatentable claim 15 or claim 16, which depends from claim 15. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

V. New Claims 17 and 18

New claims 17 and 18 have been added. It is respectfully submitted that new claims 17 and 18 add no new matter and are fully supported by the present application, including the Specification. Support may be found, for example, at page 3, lines 13 to 19 of the Specification and at Figure 1.

Since claims 17 and 18 ultimately depend from claim 15 and therefore include all of the features of claim 15, it is respectfully submitted that claims 17 and 18 are patentable over the references relied upon for at least the same reasons set forth above in support of the patentability of claim 15.

VI. Conclusion

It is therefore respectfully submitted that all of the presently pending claims are allowable. All issues raised by the Examiner having been addressed, an early and favorable action on the merits is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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